

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 03458 011617Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DOEE-00 /138 W
-----124445 011621Z /50

P R 011029Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3399
INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ENRG, PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: POWER SHUT-DOWN AGAIN DAMAGES VALCO OPERATION

1. POWER SHUT-DOWN LASTING ALMOST FOUR HOURS EVENING APRIL 30
BLACKED OUT ACCRA, TEMA AND OTHER AREAS AND DID SERIOUS DAMAGE
TO U.S.-OWNED VOLTA ALUMINIUM COMPANY (VALCO). VALCO RESIDENT
DIRECTOR ARMANTROUT INFORMED AMBASSADOR EARLY MORNING MAY 1
THAT COMPANY HAD LOST APPROXIMATELY 430 OF 500 POTS. COMPANY
WILL NOW BE OPERATING AT ONLY 13-14 PERCENT CAPACITY. IT IS
TOO SOON FOR DETAILED ESTIMATE OF DAMAGES, BUT ARMANTROUT
ESTIMATES TOTAL COULD APPROXIMATE \$15 MILLION.

2. WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHETHER OUTAGE WAS CAUSED BY SABOTAGE
AT AKOSOMBO DAM GENERATING STATION OR SIMPLY ANOTHER MECHANICAL
BREAKDOWN. DURING OUTAGE VALCO OFFICIALS WERE FRANTICALLY
SEEKING VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY (VRA) ENGINEERS TO ASSIST IN
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RESTORING POWER BUT WERE UNABLE TO FIND THE KEY PEOPLE. THEY
BELIEVE VRA ENGINEERS, MANY OF WHOM ARE KNOWN TO BE ANTI-
GOVERNMENT, ARE ON A "GO-SLOW" OPERATION.

3. COMMENT: THIS CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS BLOW TO VALCO, ONE
EVEN MORE DAMAGING THAN A SIMILAR SHUT-DOWN LAST JULY. IT IS
PROBABLE THAT VALCO WILL MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IN TRYING TO RESUME

NORMAL OPERATIONS PENDING A RETURN TO MORE STABILITY IN GHANA. IN ADDITION TO SIZEABLE LOSS TO VALCO AND FURTHER CHILLING OF SUB-ZERO INVESTMENT CLIMATE, CUT BACK WILL ALSO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE PAYMENTS FOR ELECTRICITY TO GOG, THUS ADDING FURTHER TO CURRENT ECONOMIC WOES FACING ACHAMPONG GOVERNMENT. SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Draft Date: 01 may 1978
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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